

**Testimony in Opposition to Raised SB 1142 Sect. 4 and 5.**

I am a parent of two children receiving special services as part of their education in our public school district.

I am writing in opposition to changes proposed in S.B. 1142 "AN ACT CONCERNING RELIEF OF STATE MANDATES ON SCHOOL DISTRICTS" Sections 4 and 5.

With regards to changes to Sect. 4:

Many parents of children with special needs in the public school systems of this state are placed in the position of utilizing Due Process to get their school district to provide an appropriate education under the federal IDEA legislation. This is their last resort after going through the PPT process in order to get the services their children need in the setting that they believe is appropriate for their child to thrive both academically and socially. The whole process in itself can be very daunting to the parents of a child with special needs, and taking their school district to court after exhausting other avenues is not taken lightly.

Most school districts retain the largest and most prestigious law firms in the state while many parents can not afford an educational lawyer and represent themselves and their child. Placing the burden of proof of an inappropriate education on the parents only exacerbates the David v. Goliath system that already exists with the school district having to prove that the education provided is appropriate.

I am opposed the proposed language change in Sect. 4 that places the burden of proof on the student's parents.

With regards to changes to Sect. 5:

Changing the termination of special ed. services provided by the local school district from the end of the school year of the student's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday is not in the students' best interest. Imagine after so many years striving to achieve your maximum potential in your school district only to be let go at some point during your senior year and not staying with your class through graduation! At that point, the student will most likely just be at home with their family as services are non-existent, vocational and transitional programs are school calendar-based, and job fairs/recruitment efforts typically revolve around the school calendar too.

I am opposed to the proposed language change in Sect. 5 that terminates educational services upon a student's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday instead of the end of school year that their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday occurs in.

Kenneth Cholewinski  
47 Fawn Hill Road  
Killingworth, CT 06419  
860-663-2676